

A Court of Nightmares and Stories

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Summary: During her stay at the Night Court, Feyre has a nightmare and turns to the only one who understands.

1. Chapter 1

I jerk awake, a scream lodged in my throat.

I look around the room, trying to remember where I am.

The Night Court. Not Under the Mountain. Amarantha's gone. I'm safe.

Breathe, Feyre. Breathe.

I sit up in my bed and try to calm my breathing. I can still feel my spine being snapped in two. I can still hear Amarantha's screeching laughter as I bleed out onto the floor. I can still picture Rhysand's face as he's thrown across the room, blood dripping from his nose. I can still feel him looking at me and knowing my pain.

I look at my left hand and at the eye tattoo spiraling over my skin-a consequence of making a deal with Rhysand. But he had saved my life. He understands me. He's the only one who saw me and kept me sane while Under the Mountain.

I get up from the bed, my nightgown swirling above my knees. I walk to the door in order to go find Rhys.

As I open the door, I'm met with darkness all around me. But that's no surprise in the Night Court. I've grown used to its shadows and secrets. I'm comfortable here, hidden away from the blinding and accusing light of the Spring Court. I felt trapped and suffocated at the Spring Court, but here I feel a sense of freedom and peace.

I make my way through the corridor and end up outside the library

doors. Something inside me knew that this is where I needed to be—that I would find who I was looking for.

I push open the heavy mahogany doors and find Rhysand sitting in the far corner of the library. He's sprawled across a dark settee, his feet perched on top of a table stacked with books. A small desk lamp sits at the end of the sofa, providing just enough light for him to read.

I stand in the doorway, afraid to disturb him at such a late hour. He seems engrossed in the book he's holding, so he hasn't noticed me yet.

"Feyre darling, what are you doing up?"

Or so I thought.

I look across the room and find Rhys watching me. His violet eyes roam over my body, and I remember that I stupidly came down here in only my nightgown. I glance down at myself and scowl at my undress.

"Is something bothering you?" He asks.

"Just a nightmare," I mutter, suddenly feeling foolish for coming to find him over such a petty thing.

He looks at me. "And what was your nightmare about?"

I take a breath, trying to hold back my tears. "I was Under the Mountain again. Amarantha was torturing me. I died. And those Fae I killed—"

Rhysand's eyes soften as he motions for me to walk over to him. I make my way to the sofa and sit down next to him.

"You are safe here, Feyre. Amarantha is gone. Everything is over. You will still grieve for the lives you took, but soon you will heal. It will all get better, Feyre, I promise." His violet eyes search my face and seem to reach my soul—my bitter, damned soul.

Rhys appears to understand my thoughts as he lifts a hand to my cheek. His calloused thumb swipes at a tear that escaped. "You're safe, Feyre," he whispers.

I surrender to my sorrow and guilt and lean into him. I rest my head on his shoulder and he soothingly runs a hand down my back. Rhys continues to hold me and tell me that I'm all right, that my human heart just needs to grieve. I turn my face into his neck and breathe in his cool, dark scent. He smells of starlight and spice, and I am instantly calmed and relax into him.

That is when I realize that I truly am safe, here in Rhysand's Night Court, in his arms.

I'm home.

After my tears have dried, I release a long sigh. Rhysand's arms are still holding me firmly against him, caressing my back with his gentle fingers. I have never felt so at peace. I slightly lift my head from his shoulder and press a soft kiss against his neck. I sense Rhys stiffening at my spontaneous affection. I don't know why I did it. I feel comfortable with him. Safe. He's keeping the nightmares away, something I have been trying to accomplish for the past three months.

"Will you read to me?" I ask him quietly.

Rhys chuckles, sending a jolt through my bones. "I believe _you_ should be the one reading to me, darling. You need all the practice you can get."

I scowl up at him. "I'm too tired to read," I say, curling my body around his. "I just want to listen to your voice."

Rhysand's eyes meet mine, their violet orbs searching my face. "Of course you do. Who wouldn't?" His lips curl up at the corners in his typical smirk. I heave a sigh. Rhys curls a finger under my chin, forcing me to look at him. "What would you like me to read?" He asks softly, all signs of his usual arrogance gone.

I struggle to think of a story I might have heard before. My mother never read to me, and Nesta was always too bitter and distant to pay any attention to me. And since I'm just now learning how to read, I've never had the chance in my past life-my human life-to start.

"I don't know," I say finally. "Tell me your favorite story."

Rhys looks deep in thought, as though he's searching within the recesses of his mind for a story from long ago. Rhysand is quite ancient, centuries old, in fact. I'm sure he has plenty of stories to tell. Maybe one day he'll share them all with me-share himself with me.

"All right," he says. "I know just the one. I think you will find it to your liking."

I try to get comfortable. Rhys's shoulder is digging into my temple, causing a dull ache in my head. I push away from him and shift further down the settee. Rhys is watching me the whole time, a confused expression gracing his features. He's so beautiful. How can a man be this beautiful?

I lay my head on his thigh and snuggle into him.

"Comfortable?" He sounds amused.

"Quite," I say. "I'm ready now."

He laughs softly and begins his story.

"Once there was a young boy who loved to fly. He wasn't a very memorable boy; he had no friends, no hobbies, only his wings to keep him entertained." Rhys's left arm is draped across my waist, the fingers of his other hand gently comb through my hair. "He spent most of his time exploring the open skies, flying alongside the birds, becoming like a bird himself. He enjoyed his moments of freedom in

the air; he felt as though he could live in the clouds and never come back down."

I pull Rhysand's arm over my body, bringing his hand to my face and placing light kisses on his fingers. His thumb grazes my jaw and runs along my neck to my collarbone. I suppress the sigh that tries to escape past my lips. I can sense Rhys's knowing grin as he continues his story. "One day, the boy decided to explore further than where he normally flew. He searched across the empty skies, his eyes landing on the towering mountains in the distance. When he reached the monstrous landscape, he began to explore. As he walked along the mountain's edge, he discovered several caves and nooks to hide in. He enjoyed these mountains very much.

"Each day the boy would come back to his mountain, bringing more and more of his belongings and placing them in the caves. He built a home for himself here; he made it his." Rhysand's fingers massage my scalp, sending warm tingles down my spine. "Soon enough, flocks of birds and other strange flying creatures discovered the mountains, and joined him there. He decided to transform different caves into homes for each animal. The animals became his friends and he took care of them, just as they took care of him. They all worked together and became a family. He finally felt whole, like he had a purpose."

I feel my eyes start to tire, Rhysand's fingers in my hair causing me to slowly drift off. I can barely make out what Rhys says next as I succumb to the sleep that has been waiting for me all these months.

"The boy decided to make this mountain a dwelling for others; he would create a magnificent home for those who have no home, and he would befriend those who have no friends. The boy spent the next several months building and designing his dream. Soon, his creation was complete, and he looked up in wonder at his palace in the clouds." As my eyes finally close, I faintly hear Rhys whisper: "And one day he became a High Lord for those who needed order and rule, and a friend for those who felt lost and alone, like he felt not so long ago..."

I slowly wake to the feeling of swaying. I imagine myself flying among the clouds and discovering a great mountain-palace with a variety of magical creatures and a boy with dark hair and violet eyes. I open my eyes to find myself locked in Rhysand's arms. He's carrying me back to my room; I must have fallen asleep during his story.

Rhys smoothly opens the door with one hand while still holding me securely against him. He strides across the room to my bed, pulling down the covers and gently placing me among the silken sheets. When he sets me down and positions the blankets around me, he notices that I'm awake. His sensuous mouth curves up into a smirk.

"Was my story really so boring that you fell asleep?"

I laugh under my breath. "No," I say, "I loved it. You're a very good storyteller." I smile up at him.

Rhys's smirk transforms into a grin-a genuine grin. "I'm glad you found it satisfactory," he says. He straightens to his full height

and looks down at me. "I suppose I should let you get some sleep." He begins to turn and walk away, but I grab his hand to stop him.

"Wait," I say. He pivots around to face me, a question forming in his eyes. "Could you stay with me?" I ask shyly. "I don't have nightmares when you're around."

He stares at me for so long that I become uncomfortable and feel foolish for asking such a stupid question. My cheeks burn with embarrassment and I start pulling the covers over my face when he stretches out a hand to stop me.

"Of course I'll stay with you," he says in a deep, husky voice that sends shivers throughout my body.

Rhysand moves to the other side of the bed and stretches his long body over the covers. He turns his head to look at me, his piercing eyes searching my expression for what to do next. His face is several inches from mine, but he feels too far away. I scoot my body closer to him until my head is resting on his muscular chest. He moves his arm until it is wrapped around my back, his fingers tracing patterns into the thin material of my nightgown.

I place my left hand on his chest, the swirls and designs of the eye tattoo peering up at me. Rhys's fingers close over it, holding my hand firmly in his. I relax into him and my eyes flutter shut. He continues to stroke my back as my mind begins to drift away into a peaceful dream.

As I finally surrender to sleep, I faintly hear a soft voice moving over my mind in a gentle caress.

Good night, Feyre darling.

End
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